

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A buffer device for a welding wire, wherein a wire buffer storage is arranged between a wire feeder provided on the welding apparatus, or an external wire feeding means, and a further wire feeder arranged in the region of a welding torch, or within the welding torch, and the welding wire is conducted between the two wire feeders within a wire core, wherein the wire buffer storage (35) is designed in a manner that the wire core (30) is fastened or fixed on one end, with its other end being freely movable, wherein the wire core (30) together with the welding wire (13), at least over a partial region, is arranged to be freely movable within a wire guide hose (38) extending in a helix-shaped or spiral-shaped manner and having a substantially larger cross section (39) or inner diameter than the cross section or outer diameter (33) of the wire core (30), and wherein the storage volume of the wire buffer

storage (35) is defined by the cross section (39) and length of the substantially larger wire guide hose (38), and wherein means for detecting the filling level or quantity of welding wire (13) of the wire buffer storage (35) are arranged, said detection means detecting the longitudinal movement of the wire core (30) and, in particular, the free end of the wire core (30).

Claim 2 (previously presented): A buffer device according to claim 1, wherein the wire core (30) is fastened or fixed in the region of the welding apparatus (1) or external wire feeding means (11).

Claim 3 (previously presented): A buffer device according to claim 1, wherein the inner diameter or cross section (39) of the wire guide hose (38) is at least 1.5 times larger than an outer diameter (33) of the wire core (30).

Claim 4 (previously presented): A buffer device according to claim 1, wherein the wire guide hose (38) is arranged within a

hose package (23).

Claim 5 (previously presented): A buffer device according to claim 1, wherein the wire guide hose (38) extends within said hose package (23).

Claim 6 (previously presented): A buffer device according to claim 5, wherein lines are arranged within the hose package (23) in addition to the wire guide hose (38), said lines being arranged within the helically or spirally extending wire guide hose (38).

Claim 7 (previously presented): A buffer device according to claim 1, wherein the wire guide hose (38) is arranged outside a hose package (23).

Claim 8 (previously presented): A buffer device according to claim 7, wherein the wire guide hose (38) is arranged around the hose package (23).

Claim 9 (previously presented): A buffer device according to claim 7, wherein the wire guide hose (38) is arranged to extend about a carrier material independently of the hose package (23).

Claim 10 (canceled).

Claim 11 (previously presented): A buffer device according to claim 1, wherein the wire buffer storage (35) is comprised of a structural unit comprising the wire guide hose (38), on which a terminal element, particularly a quick lock (49, 50) is arranged on either end, and the wire core (30).

Claim 12 (previously presented): A buffer device according to claim 1, wherein the wire buffer storage (35) is exchangeable without requiring any tool.

Claim 13 (previously presented): A buffer device according

to claim 11, wherein a guide element (57) of the terminal element, particularly quick lock (49, 50), projects into a sensor (51) for detecting the longitudinal movement of the wire core (30).

Claim 14 (previously presented): A buffer device according to claim 1, wherein the wire guide hose (38) is preformed in a helix-shaped or spiral-shaped manner.

Claim 15 (currently amended): A welding plant including a welding apparatus, a hose package and a welding torch, wherein the hose package connects the welding torch with the welding apparatus, and a device designed as a wire buffer storage and arranged between two wire feeders, wherein said device or wire buffer storage (35) is formed in or around the hose package (23);

wherein the wire buffer storage (35) is designed in a manner that the wire core (30) is fastened or fixed on one end, with its other end being freely movable, wherein the wire core (30) together with the welding wire (13), at least over a partial

region, is arranged to be freely movable within a wire guide hose (38) extending in a helix-shaped or spiral-shaped manner and having a substantially larger cross section (39) or inner diameter than the cross section or outer diameter (33) of the wire core (30), ~~and~~ wherein the storage volume of the wire buffer storage (35) is defined by the cross section (39) and length of the substantially larger wire guide hose (38)), and wherein means for detecting the filling level or quantity of welding wire (13) of the wire buffer storage (35) are arranged, said detection means detecting the longitudinal movement of the wire core (30) and, in particular, the free end of the wire core (30).

Claim 16 (canceled).

Claim 17 (previously presented): A welding plant including a welding apparatus, a hose package and a welding torch, wherein the hose package connects the welding torch with the welding apparatus, and a device designed as a wire buffer storage and arranged between two wire feeders, wherein said device or wire buffer storage (35) is formed in or around the hose package (23) and is designed according to claim 1.